



CRAIG KESSON

Executive Director at City of Cape Town, South Africa

I AM SPEAKING AT:

2021 | IPMA GLOBAL
BEST PRACTICE WEEK
ONLINE EVENT

April 29th | 11:00 am CEST / UTC+2

As Executive Director of Corporate Services my portfolio is broad. 11 directors report to me with a complement of 2,000 staff and total operating budget of US\$150 million. I am also the Chief Data Officer and Chief Resilience Officer for the organization. In the latter role I led the strategic responses to the Cape Town water crisis in 2017 and COVID-19 in 2020. Recently, this includes the economic recovery programme for the City.

Solving difficult and complex problems that have great impact and making sure solutions are data driven is where I am at my best from identifying the specifics of the problem to crafting practical solutions and managing interdisciplinary teams to execute. As a result, I have been exposed to large scale, large budget programmes with many moving parts.

I have consistently achieved breakthrough results in all areas of my responsibility: policy and strategy, IT for the whole organization, data science and analytics, project / programme / portfolio management, knowledge management, HR and high level OD, communications and customer relations.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Revising the outdated and unsuccessful Broadband infrastructure programme that proposes a five-year infrastructure build of US\$10 million pa capital and US\$5 million pa operating expenses.

Full upgrade of core applications IT following thorough business process and technical analysis that is internationally benchmarked. Valued at around US\$1 billion, the programme will roll out over 10 years.

Oversaw COVID-19 response between March and September 2020 that resulted in lowering the infection rate ahead of the curve and long term benefits of a supplementary healthcare system for the City and a new operating model for City management that incorporates new logistics platforms, decision support and financial modelling tools.

I am now leading the anchor of the City's Recovery Programme, that focuses on infrastructure investment on balance-sheet funded projects and project finance for off-balance sheet projects. Total investment will be US\$3 billion over 10 years. The second part is the Service Delivery Turnaround Project to reduce backlogs and improve turnaround times through data-driven programmes across all service departments.

Water Crisis: I cut my teeth on dealing with abnormal crises in 2017 heading the City's cross divisional response to the once in 500-year drought that afflicted Cape Town. We successfully brought water consumption down to unheard of levels for a city of our size and developed a water augmentation scheme that is in rollout.

